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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, classroom instruction has been viewed as a structured, deliberately sequenced process leading to predetermined goals within given time limits. However, classroom second language instruction appears to be less efficient than non-classroom language acquisition. The reason may lie in the distinction between linguistic input (all language samples the learner hears) and linguistic intake (language samples actually influencing the learner's evolving sense of the language). Research suggests that as with native language acquisition, second language intake must be adjusted so that it falls within the learner's range of comprehension but demands their active effort to identify and use the linguistic clues to meaning. Different learners may have different intake levels so that even in optimal classroom conditions, such as immersion, individuals may derive different benefits. In addition, factors common to traditional instructional methods inhibit the type of language intake. These include strict sequencing, the fact that the target language is often a second language to the teacher as well as to the students, emphasis on productive skills, and limited interaction. Language educators should look more carefully at areas in which classroom interaction could more closely imitate life. (MSE)

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INTAKE, COMMUNICATION, AND SECOND-LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Formal methods of language instruction have generally been based upon the assumption that the development of language competence in a classroom requires different activities, a different kind of interaction, and different constraints on behavior from those of the informal second-language acquisition environment. To some extent, of course, such differences are unavoidable: a natural acquisition environment normally includes one learner and an unlimited number of native speakers, whereas in the classroom there is one fluent speaker with a large number of learners; a natural acquisition environment typically includes a wide variety of times and places, while the formal environment begins and ends on schedule and (in most cases) at the classroom door. On the other hand, there are many ways in which the classroom environment is *made* different from the natural one because of our assumptions about how people learn languages in a formal environment. In the natural environment, for example, there are no formal practice exercises, no syllabus, little or no explanation of grammar, and no homework.

Attempts to make classroom learning (and the kind of language learned) more similar to non-classroom interaction and language use have led in recent years to instructional methods which emphasize interpersonal communication, contextualized and personalized practice, in-class discussion of topics of current interest, etc. It is undeniable that such trends have wrought genuine improvements in the quality of language instruction we are able to offer, and that they represent a healthy and exciting trend away from lock-step methodologies and towards more humane education. Nevertheless, they touch only indirectly on an aspect of the acquisition environment which is known to be vital in non-classroom situations: the way in which language is used in daily interactions between fluent and non-fluent speakers, as a way of providing the data from which the learner constructs a coherent sense of grammaticality and meaning in the second language.

The enormous handicap which hearing impairment places on language acquisition demonstrates just how essential input data in some form is for the acquisition of language. For small children, this data is available through the speech of adults and older children; for adults in a foreign-language environment, it comes through interaction with native speakers of that language. In both cases, it has been shown that the fluent speakers regularly adjust their language to the listening competence of the acquirer by speaking more slowly, pronouncing clearly, using less complex structures, etc. (Krashen 1980). It has also been shown that children respond to this adjusted register of speech rather than to normal adult-to-adult discourse (Snow 1971).

In the case of children learning their first language, psycholinguists have differed in their explanations of how input affects the acquisition process; but it has never been seriously argued that first-language acquisition, under normal circumstances, depended upon any variable condition beyond the normal day-to-day verbal interaction which is a part of a child's normal environment. This view of language acquisition is generally extended to include children's second-language acquisition. For adults learning a second language, however, popular and professional notions of the conditions required for minimal success are much more varied. Success in formal language learning has been seen, in general, as a function of some combination of intelligence, talent, motivation, effort, and the "right" teaching method--meaning, usually, the way in which linguistic rules are ordered and presented and the way in which student practice

is organized. The target language samples used in everyday classroom interaction have received very little attention.

The view of adult second-language learning as a function of conscious intellectual effort has been seriously challenged in recent years. Numerous studies of adults learning a second language have revealed that the sequences of linguistic development in adults closely resemble those of children learning a first or second language (Bailey, Madden, and Krashen 1974; Perkins and Larsen-Freeman 1975). In detailed studies of the utterances of German students learning English in school, Felix (1981a) has shown that the "natural" developmental sequence occurs in many structural areas in the formal learning situation, even though the natural order is different from the sequence of instruction. Furthermore, Felix (1982) notes that formal (that is, classroom) learners do apply certain complex rules of structure which are not taught in language classes, even though the same learners may fail to apply other rules which they "know" in the intellectual sense. Although there is still considerable debate as to how clear a distinction can be made between explicit (or "learned") and implicit (or "acquired") knowledge of a second language, the point remains that the performance of second-language learners cannot be satisfactorily explained as a function of consciously-learned linguistic rules.

An alternative view of adult second-language learning is that it depends only in part, and in very limited contexts, upon understanding of linguistic principles. Researchers like Krashen (1977), Bialystok (1981), and Felix (1981a) have suggested that real language competence depends upon a kind of intuitive sense of grammaticality which is not consciously learned, but which develops through a regular progression of stages (like first-language acquisition) as a function of an innate human language-acquiring capacity in the presence of appropriate conditions. The learner's involvement in linguistic interaction appears to be among the most critical of these conditions, if it is not the single most critical one.

This raises the question of why "direct" teaching methods and immersion experiences are not uniformly successful in producing fluent speakers of foreign languages, since both do make extensive target-language samples available to the learner. The answer may lie in the distinction between language *input* (all language samples which the learner hears) and *intake* (language samples which actually influence the learner's evolving sense of the language). Although there are still many unanswered questions about how intake influences language development, it is not generally agreed that the listener's active involvement in decoding linguistic signals is a crucial feature of intake. This implies that intake must be appropriately adjusted so that it falls within the range of the listeners' comprehension but that it demands their active effort to identify and use the linguistic clues to meaning. This is, indeed the kind of adjustment that has been found in parents' speech to children (Newport 1975) and in native speakers' language addressed to foreigners (Freed 1978).

It is clear that in a second-language environment, there are many linguistic signals to which the learner does not attend, whether because of fatigue, lack of interest, or a preoccupation with some other line of thought at the moment. Those who have attempted to follow a prolonged native-speaker conversation in a language in which they are not fluent can attest to the effort required for sustaining their attentiveness to the discourse; if the language is not consistently tailored to a level of understanding within the listener's grasp,

attention soon begins to drop and the listener's mind wanders to other concerns. The range of discourse to which an individual attends and the degree of tailoring which he or she requires probably fluctuate with mood, fatigue, etc. It also seems likely that the nature of optimal discourse vary from one learner to another, even at the same level of language proficiency, depending upon a variety of psychological, affective, and social factors. It is hardly surprising, then, that we have yet to discover the ideal language-learning environment in which every learner will predictably achieve fluent command of a foreign language.

With these conditions in mind, it is not difficult to understand why different individuals in an immersion environment--reputedly the best possible situation for language acquisition--may derive very different kinds and degrees of benefit from it. For example, some learners seize every opportunity to communicate in the foreign language: they enroll in leisure-time classes, they seek out the company of native speakers, they actively try to initiate conversations with taxi drivers, shop clerks, waiters, classmates, and co-passengers on trains and busses. Others interact less: they associate with speakers of their own language if possible; they learn the minimum number of stock phrases for ordering meals and buying necessities; they shop in self-service stores to avoid sales clerks; they use a map instead of asking directions.

But beyond controlling the number of situations in which they will need to interact in the language of the country, foreigners can also do a great deal within interaction situations to limit the amount and the complexity of the language samples addressed to them. Numerous studies of "foreigner-talk" discourse (e.g., Freed 1978, Tarone 1980, Long 1981, Scarcella and Higa 1981) have demonstrated that when native speakers talk to foreigners, their language is simpler than the language they use with one another; however, it is more complex than the language which their non-native interlocutors produce. In other words, their language is tailored to the listener's ability to understand rather than to his or her speaking ability. In order to decide whether to simplify further, to restate a question, to go on to another topic, etc., it seems probable that native speakers depend upon a range of subtle clues from the foreign conversational partners--eye contact, facial expression, hesitation, nodding or shaking the head, gesture, etc.--as well as explicit verbal signs like "Yes, I understand" or "Please repeat." This means that with only a minimum of demand upon their limited linguistic skill, non-natives can exercise considerable control over the pace and complexity of the interaction, simply by manipulating the level of comprehension perceived by the fluent speaker.

At the present time, we are not able to say precisely what function linguistic intake plays in the development of second-language fluency. It may be that the second-language samples heard by the acquirer serve in some sense as models against which hypotheses about the form of the language can be tested. They may serve a more general function, simply helping the acquirer form a sense of the limits on possible combinations of words and sounds in the second language. Or, perhaps, linguistic interaction may serve as a sort of neurological "trigger" which activates the psychological structures responsible for language acquisition. Whatever the truth of its role may be, however, it seems clear that linguistic intake is a *sine qua non* of language acquisition.

Given the importance which linguistic intake appears to have in non-classroom acquisition of language, it is somewhat surprising that little attention has

been given to determining its role in the foreign-language classroom. Intuitively, one would expect the classroom to provide an excellent environment for linguistic intake, with the teacher furnishing appropriately-adjusted linguistic forms corresponding to the meaningful content on which the students' attention is focused. But these conditions--meaningful content, appropriately-tailored linguistic forms, and the coincidence of these in the learner's attention--occur more or less spontaneously in ordinary conversation between foreigners and native speakers, whereas the problems specific to foreign-language classrooms may make the same conditions less likely to occur there.

Even in highly "communicative" classrooms, when teachers and students address each other in the target language, it is not *primarily* because they have important things to say to each other, but because practice is part of learning a foreign language. Second-language learners outside of classrooms, conversely, do not often set out to practice; they set out to get information or to buy something or simply to establish human contact. There is no way to avoid the fact that foreign-language instruction aims at teaching the language rather than at communicating as an end in itself; inevitably, however, this fact brings to the formal learning situation a kind of artificiality which is rare beyond the walls of a foreign-language classroom.

Foreign-language courses, like most academic programs, are usually based on an ordered sequence of material, and this too adds to the problem of "natural" target-language use in classes. The sequential steps around which the course is organized may vary with the teacher, the program, the syllabus, and the textbook; they may be explicitly stated or not; but to some extent they are always arbitrary, if only because our present knowledge about language acquisition has not made it possible to define an educational sequence known to be consistent with the natural acquisition process. But since textbooks and course syllabuses provide the basis for testing and grades, they are quite naturally seen by teachers and students as the main business of the course. This makes it difficult to establish the importance of activities which do not directly train students to proceed along the defined (usually structural) sequence.

The problem is compounded by the fact that the vast majority of foreign-language teachers share a native language with their students, so that it is considerably more cumbersome to "cover the material" in the target language than it is to do so in the native language. The use of the target language for everyday communication can therefore be experienced as an artificial constraint which simply impedes the progress of the class. Indeed, research in this area (Moskowitz 1976, Wing 1980) suggests that very few language teachers use the target language for as much as 80 percent of their discourse in class. When the target language is used, it may be reserved for functions where it is the least likely to interfere with the pace and direction of the class--that is, for routine functions that fall below the students' level of speaking ability rather than above it.

Another problem that faces foreign-language teachers and students is a long-standing emphasis on the productive skills, to the virtual exclusion of the receptive ones. (One might object here that the principle of "listening before speaking and reading before writing" was a cornerstone of the audiolingual method and has remained a tenent of most contemporary approaches in public schools. However, as Asher (1981) points out, the "listening" of the audiolingual method was listening for repetition rather than for comprehension.)

Behavioral objectives for language classes are generally stated in terms of oral or written performance; "oral participation" is frequently a component in the evaluation of students; and teachers, during their methods courses, are regularly instructed to see that every student speaks regularly in class.

This overriding concern for eliciting production from the students creates a situation very unlike that of the informal environment. If we learn a second language by living in a foreign country, we follow a sequence of learning which seems to be something like this: as we learn to decode language samples in our day-to-day interactions, the linguistic forms begin to take on meaning for us until we ourselves are able to use them meaningfully. In the classroom, this order may be reversed: students are asked to utter linguistic forms which have not yet become meaningful to them, and they are often expected to express meanings for which they have not acquired a second-language representation.

The classroom differs again from an immersion environment in terms of the dynamics of interaction. The natural environment, of course, contains many times more native speakers than foreigners, and the avid language acquirer can, in general, find many occasions for one-on-one conversations with native speakers. The structure of these interactions differs greatly from the discourse which normally occurs in the classroom, both because of the ratio of learners to fluent speakers and because of the implicit hierarchy of the classroom. In a natural situation, the non-fluent participant has, as mentioned earlier, a considerable amount of control over the shape of the discourse. Being an equal participant in the interaction, he or she can nominate a topic, request or offer clarification, initiate or terminate an interaction, etc. In a classroom, the teacher typically controls the discourse to a much greater extent--and the student to a lesser one--than is the case with their natural-environment counterparts. The non-verbal signals which in a one-on-one conversation can indicate interest, confusion, agreement, etc., are easily lost in the behavior of a larger group; and in any case, all the constraints typically placed on students' behavior in schools continue to militate against their assuming an active role in controlling the content and the difficulty level of the ongoing discourse. This absence of feedback, in turn, makes it much more difficult for teachers to adjust their language appropriately than for fluent speakers outside of a classroom to do the same.

To illustrate some of the foregoing points--and to show some ways in which classroom discourse might be made more appropriate for language acquisition--it may be useful to look at some examples of discourse taken from introductory university-level French classes.[2] In the first example, the teacher introduces

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[2]All examples used in this paper are taken from the data for doctoral research currently being completed by the author at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The data were collected in six sections of French 102 (second semester elementary French), each videotaped on two occasions. The classes were taught by teaching assistants, most of whom were in their second semester of teaching.

The texts are transcribed verbatim. Unintelligible material is represented by xxx.

and begins an exercise on question formation through inversion in the *passe compose*. (Note: English translations of the discourse examples are provided in Appendix A.)

Example 1

1	Teacher:	Bon, dans le livre, à la page trois cent quatre-vingt treize, n'est-ce pas, il y a beaucoup de choses au sujet de l'inversion, beaucoup d'exemples aussi.
2		Faisons très rapidement exercise six, en bas de la page, pour pratiquer l'inversion.
3		Par exemple, il y a deux personnes qui parlent, vous et votre camarade.
4		Ton frère, a-t-il une voiture?
5		Ici l'inversion avec le verbe "avoir."
6		Et puis on peut répondre, "Qui, il a une voiture," "Non, il n'a pas de voiture."
7		Okay?
8		Brian, posez la question à John ici.
9		Avec numero un.
10	Student A:	Ta soeur, a-t-elle une voiture?
11	Student B:	Qui, elle a, uh...
12	Teacher:	Une voiture?
13	Student B:	Qui, elle a une voiture.
14	Teacher:	Est-ce que vous avez une soeur, oui ou non?
15		Non, il n'a...
16		Mais il faut, il faut dire oui ou non, n'est-ce pas?
17		Qui, elle a une voiture.
18		Donc, ta soeur, a-t-elle, a-t-elle une voiture.
19		L'inversion.

One striking feature of this passage is the number of teacher utterances which are difficult to interpret. In line 1, for example, it may first appear that the teacher is simply telling the students where to look for further

clarification of inversion. Only in line 2 does it become clear that she wants them to turn to the page she has mentioned and to do an exercise. In lines 3-6, it is not immediately apparent that she is reading the example sentences for the exercise she has just announced.

Much of the difficulty of interpreting the teacher's utterances seems due to a kind of constant fragmentation of focus between linguistic rules, the mechanics of accomplishing the lesson, and the "real world" of the things and people present in the classroom. In lines 15 through 19, for example, the teacher skips from the world of the student's reality (lines 14-15) to the mechanics of the exercise (line 16), then to the hypothetical frame of reference created by the exercise (line 17), and finally to a reformulation of the student's response (line 18) and a reminder of the linguistic principle being practiced (line 19)--all with no transition and with nothing to help the students identify the topic or the frame of reference within which the teacher is operating at any given moment.

It is very interesting that the students do not appear in the least confused by the constant shifts of topic or by the somewhat "telegraphic" speech style used by the teacher. Certainly none of the individual sentences seen here would be difficult to decode; on the other hand, it seems unlikely that the students are really following the chain of thought represented by the teacher's speech, given that a researcher equipped with a videotape and a written transcript finds it necessary to go over the recording more than once in order to see that chain of thought. More likely, the students are simply functioning on the basis of cues which are unrelated to much of the teacher's discourse. Note that at a maximum, Brian and John needed to know the page number, the exercise to be done, and the item number. If they were listening specifically for this information, they could have gotten it from the teacher's discourse without interpreting anything more; if they failed to "catch" the necessary information in the teacher's discourse, they could probably get it from other sources--e.g., finding the page on which there were examples like the one on the board, looking at another student's book, etc.

The point here is that although the lesson is conducted all in French, it is hard to say that there is any real possibility for linguistic intake for the students, who appear to be looking for little more than the minimal cues they need in order to respond properly. Nor do they appear to seek or to exercise any real control over the classroom interaction. In line 11, the student's hesitation appears related to the fact that the question is based on a false assumption (that he has a sister), a fact which the teacher then verifies (line 14); however, as she points out, the exercise requires a yes or no answer--no questioning of the truth conditions is admitted (line 16).

It is difficult to imagine a situation other than a language classroom in which a second-language acquirer would so readily accept this kind of arbitrary imposition of an untrue precondition for a conversational exchange. One might, in "real life," argue the point, abandon the topic (or, indeed, the conversational partner--by no means an insignificant alternative!), or negotiate for an imaginary frame of reference which both partners are willing to accept. The absence of such behavior in the classroom reflects the sense of priorities that tends to be imposed on teachers and students alike by structure-based curricula. Those priorities might be stated as follows: "We are here first

of all to practice language forms. If, in so doing, we can manage to exchange some information and ideas with each other, so much the better--but we must take care not to let communication carry us away from the main business of the course."

Another discourse example illustrates the difficulty of combining the aim of structured practice with that of meaningful communication. Here the class is doing an exercise designed to practice the interrogative pronoun "lequel" (which one) and its variants. The exercise calls for two students to engage in an interaction like the following:

Student A: Do you know any singers?

Student B: Yes.

Student A: Which ones do you know?

Student B: I know Anne Murray and Roberta Flack.

The difficulty presented by this exercise is that while it does provide a context for practice of the linguistic rule, it violates the rules of ordinary conversation. In an everyday interaction, the first question would be interpreted as a request for the names of singers one knows, and a simple yes or no answer could only be explained as an example either of rudeness or of conversational ineptitude. Thus, the second and third lines of the interaction would not take place. The students are caught between the requirements of polite conversation and the expectation that they use a form of "lequel" in their interaction.

Example 2

1	Teacher:	Okay, bon.
2		Demandez à...Carol...si elle connaît des chanteurs et lesquels.
3		Ask her if she knows any singers and which ones.
4	Student A:	Uh...Connais-tu des chanteurs?
5	Student B:	Je connais...Mick Jagger.
		(Laughter)
6	Teacher:	Okay, lesquels...alors lesquels est-ce qu'elle connaît?
7		Which ones does she know?
8	Student A:	xxx
9	Teacher:	Elle connaît Mick Jagger.

.....

10 Teacher: Susan, est-ce que tu connais des acteurs?

11 Student: Qui, je connais...

12 Teacher: (Interrupting) Lesquelles?

13 Qui, lesquelles?

14 Student: Oh, je connais...um...Shirley Maclaine, Jane Fonda...

The teacher's translation of her French utterances into English (lines 3 and 7) is worthy of mention. The forms that the teacher is translating are virtually the same as those the students are expected to produce. If she does not expect the students to understand these cue sentences, can she really expect them to produce the longer and equally complex interaction required by the exercise? It seems more likely that the use of English has little to do with the teacher's evaluation of the students' comprehension--that it is, in fact, simply an expedient way to keep the lesson moving fairly quickly. In either case, it is clear that the priority is to get through the exercise, to accomplish the lesson, to "cover the material," rather than to create an atmosphere in which use of the second language is the norm.

It is somewhat surprising to find that the students determinedly circumvent the obvious purpose of the exercise by conforming to the rules of everyday conversation--quite unlike the behavior of the student without a sister in Example 1. Perhaps learners are more willing to ignore reality conditions for discourse than to violate conversational principles; or perhaps, since the latter exercise does provide the opportunity to furnish some personal information, the students' attention is simply drawn away from the mechanics of the structural practice. In any case, in the first part of the interaction, the teacher is unsuccessful in getting the students to produce the sequence of utterances that the exercise calls for. Finally, in the second part of the example, the teacher herself takes over the first role, but even so, the student fails to wait for the "lequel" question before starting to provide the names of actresses she knows. The teacher therefore interrupts with "Lesquelles? Qui, lesquelles?" (lines 12-13). The "oui" appears to mean, "Yes, you are giving the right answer," but the interruption itself signals "wrong"--i.e., "Don't answer until I ask you the right question."

The awkwardness of this passage exemplifies the linguistic contortions we impose on ourselves and on our students by trying to serve too many goals at once. Conversation in a second language is difficult for any learner; the attempt to manipulate it around specific linguistic structures makes it more so, especially in the case of structures for which obligatory contexts are rare. This is not to say, however, that the absence of structural requirements on classroom interaction will in itself guarantee a solution to the problems of communication in second-language classes, as demonstrated in Example 3. Here the teacher is beginning a discussion on stereotypes about the French personality, based on a reading passage from the textbook. No specific structure is being practiced. Still, it is revealing to try imagining this conversation in any context other than a classroom.

Example 3

1	Teacher:	Pensez-vous qu'il y a vraiment *une* personnalité française, typiquement française?
2		Qui?
3	Students:	Non.
4	Teacher:	Non? Pourquoi?
		(Pause)
5		Claudia?
6	Student:	Um...Je pense qu'il y a [une
7	Teacher:	(Interrupting) [Qu'il y a une personnalité française?
8		Bon, décrivez la personnalité française.
9	Student:	How do you say "pride?"
10	Teacher:	Oh...vous avez déjà eu deux mots.
11		(Writing on blackboard) Okay, "la fierté" est comme en anglais "pride," et l'adjectif, "fier."
12		Je suis fier, I'm proud.
13		Bon, est-ce que les Francais sont très fiers?
14		Ils ont beaucoup de fierté?
		(Silence)
15		Est-ce que les Français sont nationalistes?

By most commonly-cited criteria, this interaction qualifies as an excellent example of "communicative" classroom discourse. Personal opinions are elicited, student responses need conform to no particular model, and the conversation develops around a cultural--rather than a linguistic--topic. Yet it is clear that the teacher defines her own role not as that of a conversational partner or facilitator, but as one responsible for telling her students how to speak. It is hard to explain the motivation for interruption in line 7, and it is interesting that her question in line 8 assumes her interpretation of the student's intended utterance to be correct, although she has not sought confirmation from the student that this is so. In line 9, the student asks for a vocabulary item, apparently in an attempt to prepare herself to express an opinion in French. The teacher, however, promptly and efficiently removes from the student any chance to express a genuine and personal viewpoint. In her response to the student, she first reminds her that the word requested has

been introduced previously (line 10), then provides two lexical items and an example (lines 11-12); and finally, without pausing to allow the student to formulate her own thought, she questions the truth of what she now assumes the student to believe (that the French are proud), although the student has not expressed that option and may not have wished to.

It would be difficult to show that the student in Example 3 ceases to process the teacher's language at any point in that passage. On the other hand, a great deal of research supports the belief that language acquisition is highly sensitive to affective factors. Krashen (1980) has suggested that the acquirer's ability to receive linguistic input may be limited by an "affective filter" under stressful or threatening conditions. Scarcella and Higa (1981) suggest that the active participation of acquirers in a conversational situation may "charge" the input and increase their receptivity to it. It seems quite possible that in a climate where students expect interruption, reproval, and arbitrary interpretation of their utterances, they might not only minimize their speaking but minimize their listening as well, and that their retention of what they do hear might be reduced. All of these considerations would seem to argue the need for an instructional climate in which students' efforts to participate as equals in the communicative act are both supported and respected.

It seems clear that the issue of "manipulation" versus "communication" is not merely a matter of choosing between transformation drills and group discussion. Communication is an activity which requires two or more autonomous participants, one of whom may benefit from the skill of the other in making the interaction succeed; but the more one participant's output is subject to another's control, the more the discourse becomes the sole creation of the more proficient individual--and that is not communication!

It may begin to appear that language acquisition in the classroom is being pronounced impossible or nearly so, but that is not the case. It is true that our perception of what occurs in a classroom must take into account the processes of language acquisition as we begin to discover and to understand them, and it is true that the teacher's role in the classroom must be redefined in terms of the quality of interaction furnished to students. But these changes may not be as dramatic (or as chaotic) as one might imagine. In the following example (recorded on the same day as Example 2), another teacher is working with the interrogative pronoun "lequel." By coincidence, this lesson occurred in the same week as the "Oscar" awards, and the teacher focuses upon that event to foster conversation in class.

Example 4

1	Teacher:	Maintenant...est-ce que vous avez regardé la cérémonie lundi, à la télé, pour les prix américains du film?
2	Student A:	Non.
3	Teacher:	Personne?
4		Vous étudiez, c'est ça.
5	Students:	(Murmers, laughter)

6		Oh, oui...
7		xxx le français
8	Teacher:	Terri, vous avez regardé un peu, n'est-ce pas?
9	Student B:	J'ai vu le film de la cérémonie.
10	Teacher:	Uh-huh...bon.
11		Quels films étaient désignes pour le prix du meilleur film de l'année?
12	Student B:	*Kramer vs. Kramer*
13	Teacher:	Qui...*Kramer vs. Kramer* a gagné.
14		Mais quels étaient les autres films désignés pour le prix?
15	Student B:	Uh...*Apocalypse Now*, *Norma Rae*, *All That Jazz*...
16	Student C:	(Interrupting) *Breaking Away*...
17	Teacher:	*Breaking Away*, oui...
18		Lequel préférez-vous?
19	Student B:	Um...j'aime *Kramer vs. Kramer*.
20	Teacher:	Donc vous êtes d'accord avec le prix.
21	Student B:	Oui, mais je n'ai pas vu toutes les films.
22	Teacher:	Bon, lequel des films désignés préférez-vous, Elise?
23	Student D:	xxx je préfére *Kramer vs. Kramer*.

In comparison to the earlier examples, this passage includes very active student participation, ranging from simple yes/no answers (lines 2, 6) to full sentences (lines 9, 19, 21, 23). The quality of the discussion seems perfectly natural and unforced, and there is no fragmentation of focus between content and form. It is clear from student responses that they are actively involved not only as speakers but also as listeners and that the teacher's discourse is just difficult enough to demand that they do some intelligent guessing of meanings from the context. In line 12, for example, the student interprets the teacher's question incorrectly and furnishes the name of the winning film rather than the names of those nominated. The teacher accepts the student response (line 13) but also repeats the question (line 14), thus bringing into salience the difference between her original question and the student's erroneous interpretation of it. The student then provides an appropriate response (line 15).

By adjusting her own discourse at a level which demands an active hypothesis-testing process (and therefore active attention) in order to be decoded, the teacher exerts a certain kind of control over student behavior. The choice and timing of her questions also does a great deal to shape the ongoing discussion, both in terms of the content and in terms of the structures used. At no point, however, does she impose words, forms, or content on her students--what they say is utterly their own. Her respect for student contributions is further demonstrated by her use of student responses as a basis for following moves (lines 11, 18, 20). The fact that their responses are not merely approved and then abandoned communicates to the students that what they have to say--whether they say it fluently or not--is valued and respected.

In Example 4, the students' output is, on the whole, grammatically accurate. A gender error ("toutes" for "tous") in line 21 is disregarded, whether by design or by chance, but does not interfere with the flow of the discussion. But what if a student's error does interfere with comprehensibility? Is it not then necessary for the teacher to correct and clarify the utterance, if only in order to allow other students to follow the discourse? The situation arises in the following example, taped on the same day as Example 3 (the discussion of cultural stereotypes).

Example 5

1	Teacher:	Est-ce que vous avez une impression du caractère français typique, Donna?
2	Student A:	Ils sont très romantiques.
3	Teacher:	C'est une des idées...une des impressions qu'on a.
4		Est-ce que vous avez d'autres idées?
5		Paul?
6	Student B:	Le Francais typique déteste les touristes américains.
		(Laughter)
7	Teacher:	Je pense que c'est vrai, oui.
8		Vous avez d'autres impressions?
		(Pause)
9		Roger, vous venez de faire la connaissance d'un Francais.
10		Quelles sont vos impressions?
11	Student C:	Ah...c'est...c'est ne Français typique.
12	Teacher:	Il n'était pas typique?

13 Student C: Ne personne est typique.

14 Teacher: Personne n'est typique?

15 C'est à dire qu'il n'est pas possible de généraliser, c'est ça?

16 Student C: Oui.

Once again, while the teacher does structure and facilitate the conversation, she allows students full control of their own output. It is interesting to note, in passing, that her acceptance of student responses takes the form of a comment on the topic (lines 3, 7) rather than that of an evaluation (e.g., "très bien"). This strategy not only communicates a non-judgmental interest in the student's contribution but also provides some relatively complex language for the students to attend to in a context where their interest is likely to be high. (Most of us do want to know what an authority figure has to say about our efforts.)

In lines 11-16, the teacher faces the problem of student utterances containing major grammatical errors. Although the student is somewhat slow in producing an entire utterance, and although it is clear before the end of the sentence that it contains major grammatical errors, the teacher does not intervene until the student reaches the end of his utterance. She then responds (lines 12 and 14) in a way that serves two functions: to expand the student's utterance into a correct form (a frequent strategy in parent-child discourse) and then to seek confirmation of her interpretation from the student. In this manner she invites the student to attend to the correct form, but she simultaneously recognizes him as the "meaning maker," the ultimate authority on what he really intended to say. In line 15, she paraphrases his idea, again inviting him to listen and to let her know whether or not she is accurately reflecting his idea. The teacher, then, takes on the function of a consultant, helping the students find the words and forms necessary to express their ideas, but leaving with them the final responsibility of deciding what to say.

The examples we have seen help to underscore an important point: that the quality of classroom interaction is not simply a function of the "right" method or class activity, but that it is closely linked to our most basic attitudes about the learning process, about communication itself, and about our role as teachers. These attitudes have a profound effect on the amount and degree of communication that can be achieved in our classrooms.

Traditionally, we have viewed classroom instruction as a structured, deliberately sequenced process leading to predetermined goals within given time limits; and it may be difficult to think of the classroom as an acquisition environment when language acquisition outside of the classroom depends on internal structures and processes which we are only beginning to understand. Nevertheless, for whatever reasons, the success rate of non-classroom language acquisition appears to be phenomenally higher than that of classroom instruction (Asher 1981), and it would seem highly desirable for language educators to look carefully at areas in which classroom art might benefit from a closer imitation of life. The question of linguistic intake would appear to be such

an area, not only because of the important role it appears to play in non-classroom language acquisition, but also, in spite of the many external factors which might prevent it from occurring spontaneously in the classroom, because there seems to be no *a priori* reason why it might not play a crucial role in classroom instruction to the extent that it is available.

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APPENDIX

Example 1

1	Teacher:	Good, in the book, on page 393, right, there are a lot of things about inversion, a lot of examples too.
2		Let's do exercise six quickly, at the bottom of the page, to practice inversion.
3		For example, there are two people talking, you and your friend.
4		Does your brother have a car?
5		Here, inversion with the verb "avoir."
6		And then you can answer, "Yes, he has a car," "No, he doesn't have a car."
7		Okay?
8		Brian, ask John here that question.
9		With number one.
10	Student A:	Does your sister have a car?
11	Student B:	Yes, she has, uh...
12	Teacher:	A car?
13	Student A:	Yes, she has a car.
14	Teacher:	Do you have a sister, yes or not?
15		No; he doesn't...
16		But you have to, you have to say yes or no, don't you?
17		Yes, she has a car.
18		So does your sister, does your sister have a car?
19		Inversion.

Example 2

1	Teacher:	Okay, good.
2		Ask...Carol...if she knows any singers and which ones.
3		(Translates)

4 Student A: Uh...Do you know any singers?

5 Student B: I know...Mick Jagger.

(Laughter)

6 Teacher: Okay, which ones...so which ones does she know?

7 (Translates)

8 Student A: xxx

9 Teacher: She knows Mick Jagger.

.....

10 Teacher: Susan, do you know any actors?

11 Student: Yes, I know...

12 Teacher: (Interrupting) Which ones?

13 Yes, which ones?

14 Student: Oh, I know...um...Shirley Maclaine, Jane Fonda...

Example 3

1 Teacher: Do you think there is really *one* French personality, a typically French personality?

2 Yes?

3 Students: No.

4 Teacher: No? Why?

(Pause)

5 Claudia?

6 Student: Um...I think that there's a

7 Teacher: (Interrupting) That there's a French personality?

8 Good, describe the French personality.

9 Student: How do you say "pride?"

10 Teacher: Oh...You've already had two words.

11 (Writing on blackboard) Okay, "la fierte" is like in English "pride," and the adjective, "fier."

12 Je suis fier, I'm proud.

13 Good, are the French very proud?

14 Do they have a lot of pride?

(Silence)

15 Are the French nationalistic?

Example 4

1 Teacher: Now...Did you watch the ceremony Monday, on television, for the American film awards?

2 Student A: No.

3 Teacher: Nobody?

4 You were studying, that's it.

5 Students: (Murmers, laughter)

6 Oh, yes...

7 ...French

8 Teacher: Terri, you watched a little bit, didn't you?

9 Student B: I saw the film of the ceremony.

10 Teacher: Uh-huh...good.

11 Which films were nominated for the best film of the year award?

12 Student B: *Kramer vs. Kramer.*

13 Teacher: Yes...*Kramer vs. Kramer* won.

14 But what were the other films nominated for the award?

15 Student B: Uh...*Apocalypse Now*, *Norma Rae*, *All That Jazz*...

16 Student C: (Interrupting) *Breaking Away*...

17 Teacher: *Breaking Away*, yes...

18 Which one do you like best?

19: Student B: Um...I like *Kramer vs. Kramer.*

20 Teacher: So you agree with the prize.

21 Student B: Yes, but I didn't see all the films.

22 Teacher: Good, which of the nominated films do you like best, Elise?

23 Student D: I like *Kramer vs. Kramer* best.

Example 5

1 Teacher: Do you have an impression of the typical French character, Donna?

2 Student A: They are very romantic.

3 Teacher: That's one of the ideas...one of the impressions that people have.

4 Do you have other ideas?

5 Paul?

6 Student B: The typical Frenchman hates American tourists.

7 Teacher: I think that's true, yes.

8 Do you have other impressions?

(Pause)

9 Roger, you've just met a French person.

10 What are your impressions?

11 Student C: Ah...*he isn't a typical Frenchman.*

12 Teacher: He wasn't typical?

13 Student C: *Nobody is typical.*

14 Teacher: Nobody is typical?

15 In other words it isn't possible to generalize, is that it?